


Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Have the Right to a Free, Appropriate Public Education

Presenter:



The Scale of Homelessness

- ❖ Up to two million people will experience homelessness this year.
- ❖ Approximately half will be children and youth.
- ❖ The fastest growing segment of the homeless population is families.




How vulnerable are you to becoming homeless?


Answer “yes” or “no” to the following:

- ❖ Could you ever become involved in a flood, fire, tornado, or other natural disaster?
- ❖ Do you work in an area of the economy/job market where your job might become obsolete?
- ❖ Could you ever suffer from a long-term illness or accident without proper health benefits or other compensations?
- ❖ Do you live in a household with no more than one full-time wage earner?
- ❖ Are you behind in any monthly bills?
- ❖ Are housing costs in your area increasing faster than wages?
- ❖ Does anyone in your family struggle with addictions such as drugs or alcohol?

Who is homeless?

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- ❖ An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth :
 - sharing housing due to loss of housing or economic hardship
 - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate housing
 - living in emergency or transitional housing

Who is homeless? (cont'd)

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- ❖ including children and youth :
 - abandoned in hospitals
 - awaiting foster care
 - having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations
 - living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
 - migratory children meeting the homeless definition

Possible Signs Homelessness

These characteristics could be attributed to students with other issues as well as those students experiencing homelessness.


- ❖ Attendance at several schools
- ❖ More than one family at the same address
- ❖ Attention seeking behavior
- ❖ Hunger & hoarding of food
- ❖ Poor hygiene & grooming
- ❖ Sleeping in class
- ❖ Inappropriate dress for the weather
- ❖ Some common statements used by homeless students include:
 - *We've moved a lot*
 - *We are staying with relatives/friends while looking for a place*
 - *We're going through a bad time now*






Get Out Fast!

- ❖ Your home is on fire and there are just seconds to get out!
- ❖ What would you grab and shove into a trash bag to take with you?



McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, 2001 (P.L. 107-110, Title X, Part C)

- ❖ Reauthorizes the *McKinney Act*, originally enacted in 1987
- ❖ Requires
 - enrollment,
 - attendance, and
 - success for children and youth experiencing homelessness
- ❖ Provides states with funding to provide local subgrants and outreach to all LEAs




Enrollment: McKinney-Vento Act

Requires public schools to immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness regardless of documentation, such as:


- proof of residency,
- school records, or
- immunization records

not being available at the time of enrollment.




Enrollment: McKinney-Vento Act

- ❖ Provides school choice - students can stay in their school of origin, if parent/unaccompanied youth prefers and feasible.
- ❖ Requires public notice of educational rights of homeless children and youth be posted in all public schools.
- ❖ Requires unaccompanied youth be provided educational access.



Attendance: McKinney-Vento Act

- ❖ School districts must provide transportation to ensure access to school
- ❖ School districts may not use homelessness as a reason to provide separate school experiences for homeless students



Success: McKinney-Vento Act

- ❖ Requires homeless students receive services comparable to those available to housed students.
- ❖ Promotes high school or GED completion.
- ❖ Supports collaboration between social service agencies and school districts serving students.



Success:

McKinney-Vento Act

- ❖ Requires parents be fully informed of enrollment options and educational opportunities available to their children.
- ❖ Requires schools/districts provide written explanations of decisions when enrollment disputes occur.
- ❖ Prohibits separate schools or programs for students experiencing homelessness.



State & Local Policy

- ❖ Iowa policy: Refer to Chapter 33, Educating the Homeless, Iowa Administrative Code.
- ❖ Web site address:
<http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/is/homeless/legis.html>



Addressing Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness

❖ School District

- Set aside Title I funds,
- Reserve slots in Head Start and Even Start,
- Ensure enrollment

❖ Schools

- Enroll students in free breakfast and lunch programs,
- Ensure access appropriate instructional supports/resources, including those available through Title I set asides, gifted programs, and special education.
- Conduct an educational assessment,
- Provide homeless awareness training, and
- Alert teachers of a student's living situation (respecting privacy)



Addressing Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness (continued)

❖ Teachers

- Make the student feel welcome,
- Assign a peer buddy to help the student get acquainted with the school and classroom,
- Make contact with the parents,
- Give the child ownership of school space (e.g., cubbie, locker, etc.)



Working With Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- ❖ Reduce school entry stress
- ❖ Promote academic success through encouraging words and actions that recognize the gains made
- ❖ Use tutoring and after-school programs to provide academic support
- ❖ Increase access to services and activities



Working With Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- ❖ Encourage supportive relationships
- ❖ Establish consistent boundaries
- ❖ Have high expectations
- ❖ Recognize stressful environment outside of school and provide accommodations for homework (e.g., s/he may not be able make a collage or do a science project outside of school)
 - Provide needed supplies
 - Provide time and space in the school
 - Modify homework



*Education is the key to breaking
the cycle of homelessness*